



COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

July 18, 2022

Minutes

In Attendance:

Renee Ciconte, Director, Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services
Cassandra Davis, Deputy Director, Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services
Joe Bryant, DYRS, Chief of Community Services
Danielle Stevenson, DYRS
Aileen Fink, Director, Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health
Judy McCormick, Delaware Council on Gambling Problems
John Schmidt, Delaware Council on Gambling Problems
Maya Andrews, Parent Information Resource Center
Tim Brandau, Community Member
Espie Hart, DYRS
Tanya Banks, DYRS
Eric McLaurin, DYRS
Sean Waynant, DYRS
Sean Harris, DYRS
Kimberly Warren, DFS

Welcome/Introductions

Director Ciconte welcomed the group. Meeting began with general opening remarks at 10:03am.

Recruitment and Retention Initiatives

Director Ciconte informed the group on the department's newest initiatives to recruit and retain staff. These initiatives include:

\$200 Weekend Incentive - the \$200 weekend incentive is for YRS and PBH staff working weekend shifts in DSCYF 24/7 facilities. Per union contract, YCS's are required to have every other weekend off, making it difficult to staff the facilities over the weekends. This incentive is being paid to staff who work a full shift from c shift on Friday evenings to C shift on Sunday evenings. The hope is to decrease call outs, increase staff who volunteer for OT shifts, and decrease freezing.

12 Hour Weekend Shift – the 12-hour weekend shift is currently active and has been posted online. DYRS has been granted 4 of these positions. These are casual/seasonal



positions that will be scheduled to work 8am-8pm Saturday's and Sunday's. The position will pay \$40 an hour and will also include 2 paid days off yearly.

Juvenile and Adult Probation Officer OT – DYRS has also opened voluntary overtime shifts for adult and juvenile probation officers to assist in covering shifts in DYRS facilities. These shifts are posted weekly for sign up.

Labor Management Retreats – DYRS has begun hosting Labor Management Retreats quarterly to share ideas and solutions to our current staffing challenges.

Division Strategic Plan

DYRS is working diligently on updating the strategic plan that began prior to the COVID19 pandemic. The hope is to have this plan completed by the next Community Advisory Board meeting. COVID19 delayed progress on the plan. As we return to normalcy after the pandemic, we are now pushing to move this plan forward. To spearhead and advance some of the initiatives in the plan, work groups will be created centered around specific topics. We will be asking staff and other stakeholders to participate in these groups. It is anticipated that the strategic plan will roll out completely in roughly a month.

OC Spray Implementation

The use of OC spray has begun in all DYRS facilities. The decision to use OC spray was driven by concerns regarding staff and youth injuries. The purpose of the spray is to equip staff with another tool to decrease hands on encounters and restraints, therefore decreasing staff and youth injuries. Staff are trained to try to resort to other means of de-escalation prior to using the tool. All staff classified as supervisors and above have been trained on the use of the spray by in house staff trainers.

In order to implement OC spray in DYRS facilities and adhere to ADA standards, it was necessary to secure 24/7 nursing for youth in care. Christiana Care is currently struggling with staffing these roles; therefore, OC spray is only used during nursing hours. The spray will be fully rolled out once there is a full nursing compliment.

OC spray has been used once to this point and proved effective. It was used properly and the youth receiving the spray was seen by medical and determined to be in good health afterward.

Community Services Re-Organization

DYRS Community Services oversees roughly 600 cases. About 5 years ago, Community Services oversaw almost 2000 cases. Caseload sizes are trending down approximately 65% and are currently in the teens for DYRS staff. DYRS is looking to return some of the low-level cases that were previously sent to providers. Administration is currently looking at zip codes and staffing to move cases around to better re-organize community services. The division is working to roll this out to the team. The plan includes a very robust pre-trial side and to be lighter on



probation, as Civil Citation is helping to reduce the regular probation needs. In addition, youth in Youth Wellness Court (diversionary court) get a case manager from CSRC, further decreasing regular probation caseloads.

Additionally, DYRS is seeing lower facility populations, as Ferris is currently housing 18 youth, Snowden housing much less than normal and Mowlds Cottage closed and possibly being used for other department needs.

Additional Items

DPBH Update

PBH Director Fink informed the group of their plans to renovate Wharton Hall with ARPA funds that were awarded. This renovation is anticipated to be completed by 2026. In the interim, PBH is making changes at Terry Center. There have not been many youth referrals, so PBH plans to shift the service provision starting at Terry Center, and instead, house an adolescent diagnostic and stabilization center, to include nursing and a behavioral analyst. The hope is to keep those youth that should not be in detention from entering the detention center. Once the renovation is complete, the program will move to Wharton Hall.

Delaware Council on Gambling Problems Update

John Schmidt gave an update on his presentations at NCCDC. The presentations were well received by the youth. Mr. Schmidt explained that he tries to structure the program to help youth understand risk in general. He also spends time talking about relationships with technology. He would like to bring the presentation to our Stevenson House youth as well. In addition to his current program, he is open to and wants to be included in anything that is risk related with our youth, including talking to parents about video games and electronics. It was suggested to the superintendents that Mr. Schmidt do his presentation at parent nights.

Parent Information Resource Center Update

Ms. Andrews from the PIRC spoke to the group of challenges with youth receiving services they need at a younger age, causing fear that there will be many more teens in care in the coming years. PIRC is trying to find providers to work with parents from the beginning to be successful. The group was also reminded the PIRC also helps youth with special education needs or needs to self-advocate. The resource center has a wide variety of training that can be done at any time. The PICR just started a Delaware Public Education Ombudsman program through the Department of Education and suggested someone from this group attend future CAB meetings.

Next Meeting: September 12, 2022 @ 9:00am
DSCYF Admin Campus, 1825 Faulkland Rd. Conference Room #199